

# NOVEL READING.

(By an Occasional Contributor.)

GEORGE ELIOT.—Although in these few articles upon the reading of novels by Catholics, we mapped out short sketches of five leading writers of romance—Dickens, Scott, Thackeray, Lytton and Beaconsfield—before dealing with the last mentioned, we wish to dot down a few remarks concerning the chief female novelist of English literature—George Eliot. We do so at this stage, because we consider that our young people are far more likely to be tempted to read her works than those of the great literary statesman whose romances were a mere tissue of political and diplomatic intrigues. Besides George Eliot has had, for years, a powerful sway in the realm of light, or imaginative literature, and she has had the unfortunate faculty of leaving deep impressions upon those who read her works. We say "read," because any person, of sound judgment and sane morals, who has studied her books cannot but come to the conclusion that she painted worlds as false as the one in which she lived, and that she prepared her readers for lives as fruitless and as wretched in their ending as was her own. In this instance we cannot separate the life of the writer from the works that she has given to the world. To ignore her own career would be to omit the key to her so-called principles to neglect the mainspring of her false coloring and still falser reasoning. We know of no writer of fiction, be it in our age or in any other one, more dangerous and more to be avoided than George Eliot; and the fact of her being a woman makes the matter still worse.

Mary Ann Evans was born in 1820, and was from her infancy an exceedingly clever child. In her early school days she developed talents that were not to be expected in a girl or woman—in fact, they were masculine in their vigor and extensiveness. She had a wonderful aptitude for the study and acquirement of languages, as well as for the art of English composition. She was destined no doubt to become a great writer, and her subsequent career, when she entered the field of romance and assumed the name of George Eliot justified the most extravagant prophecies that could have been made regarding her. She wrote early and wrote well; that is to say, from a literary point of view. One eminent critic has justly said: "Standing as an impassable barrier, morality warns us that, value George Eliot as we will, from the literary standpoint, no success can excuse her disregard for social virtue."

The translation of Strauss' "Life of Jesus" appears to have been her first serious work and, at the same time, the foundation of her anti-Christian principles. From 1852 to

1859 she was an assistant editor of the "Westminster Review." It was then she met the infidel essayist, George Henry Lewes. Their subsequent career together—putting into practice the false ideas of morality, which they preached—ended in the personal dishonor of the weaker one. It was in 1857 that she wrote "Scenes of Clerical Life," a work that at once stamped her as a dangerous—an able and therefore still more dangerous—person. In 1859 she began her course of novel writing with "Adam Bede." This is the first, and possibly the strongest of all her works. It created a reputation for her, and set her at once in the first rank of English novelists.

A list of her principal novels gives an idea of her industry. "The Mill on the Floss," (1860); "Silas Marner," (1861); "Romola," (1863); "Felix Holt," (1866); "The Spanish Gypsy," (1868)—this one in verse; "Middlemarch," (1872); "Daniel Deronda," (1877). It is said that she consulted over one thousand volumes to write this book. Her last work was "Impressions of Theophrastus Such," in 1879. At the end of her life she married Mr. J. W. Cross—but only lived one year in actual married life.

Brother Azarias says: "George Eliot cast off the shreds of Christianity that had hung about her when she first began to write, and in her later works suppressed all Christian influence as false and pernicious. Here is the fountain whence flows the poison permeating this gifted writer's later works." Why Brother Azarias dwells specially upon her "later works" it is difficult to say, for his estimate of them applies equally to all her important writings. In fact, the poison can be traced back to her very first production "The Life of Jesus."

Our reason for thus drawing attention to George Eliot and the danger of his novels is two-fold; firstly she decidedly ranks, in a literary sense, amongst the great English novelists, and she leads by long odds in the phalanx of female writers of romance; secondly, we have found literary associations, classes and circles, all Catholic and all under the direction of Catholics, wherein George Eliot is studied. It is quite possible that they argue to the effect that it is her style and perfection that are studied; but these cannot be made a subject of study and criticism without that the students read her novels. And no person can read them without becoming, more or less contaminated. Hence it is that we believe the works of George Eliot should be strictly forbidden in all Catholic circles. We can live without their dazzling literary splendor—we may die morally in consequence of their marked corruptness.

evil the workingman accepts harder conditions because an employer or contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice." The laborer is not a piece of machinery to be purchased at the least possible cost, and thrown aside as worthless when it is of no further use. Nor is he a mere animal needing provision for bodily wants only. He is a man with God-given faculties, of high and noble dignity, having the most sacred relations and owing the most solemn duties to his Maker, and having spiritual and mental aspirations that require to be satisfied just as much as the wants of the body."

THE MESSENGER, amongst other interesting articles, has a trenchant one upon the attack recently made upon the American public schools by the president of Harvard University.

"It is fortunate," says the writer, "that Dr. Eliot's diatribe against the public schools was not uttered by a Catholic. It would have so excited the whole country that some American Combes would have called up all our establishments. But we are used to being startled by President Eliot. With all due allowance for its sensationalism, we think it is unjust to the public schools."

Why should they be arraigned for not doing what they are forbidden to do, and what their very nature prevents them from even considering? They are purely secular, and their object is to impart exclusively secular knowledge. The ladylike morality which it is proposed to inculcate in the schools, such as kindness, gentleness, cleanliness, punctuality, etc., can never be expected to wrestle with such grim problems as the impurity, drunkenness, dishonesty, gambling, political corruption, disregard of human life, etc., which Dr. Eliot considers to have invaded the republic, and for which he holds the defects of the public schools responsible. Religion is the only power that can cope with such disorders, but by Dr. Eliot and his associates religion is debarred from the schools. It is not the schools, but it is he and other educational experimenters who are to be held accountable for the condition of affairs which he notes. To clamor for more money is to imply that the subject matter of the school curriculum is badly taught, and that the teachers are incompetent because of insufficient remuneration. What else does more money mean if it is not to spur them on or to replace them by more efficient teachers? Catholics have always considered that the opposite is true; that the subjects studied are generally good enough—or were until lately—and the teachers most devoted. Only one thing they object to, and that is the want of moral teaching, which is absolutely impossible without religion. We are quite willing to accept the schools as they are if that one gap is filled. For such a shrewd man the proposition to heal all these ills by more money is so illogical and unbusinesslike that one can scarcely regard it as serious.

In this single year we have spent for 17,000,000 pupils more than \$236,000,000, exclusive of the interest on \$576,000,000, which the school-houses are worth. Ten thousand times that sum would not be excessive if it could help the morality of the country, but it has hitherto only resulted in the harvest of crimes which he points out, then it is unreasonable to ask for more. Something is wrong with the methods. To change the metaphor, the commonest quack will discontinue the medicine which is killing the patient. Even his word will not be sufficient to assure us that money is the panacea."

The origin of the feast of Our Lady of the Snow is given in "Pilgrim Walks in Rome," by S.J., who, referring to the basilica of St. Mary Major, says:—

"This is one of the largest and noblest religious edifices of the Christian world: it is also probably the first church of our Lady publicly consecrated in Rome (though some think this distinction belongs to Santa Maria Antiqua in the Forum), and, after the basilica of Loretto, is the greatest and most important of our Lady's sanctuaries. Its ancient name was Liberian Basilica, because of its consecration by Pope Liberius in A.D. 360. It is also known as Our Lady of the Manger, from its possessing the relics of the Holy Manger, in which our infant Saviour was laid; Our Lady of the Snow, because of the miraculous event mentioned below, to which it owes its origin. St. Mary Major, because it ranks above all the churches of our Lady in Rome, and (after Loretto) in the world. The traditional story of its foundation is as follows: A Roman patrician named John, who owned the property on the Esquiline hill, where the basilica now stands, had married a pious lady, and, having no children,

he and his wife resolved to make our Lady heiress of all their property, and sought in prayer for some intimation of her will as to its disposal. One night both were bidden in their sleep to build a church on the Esquiline hill, on a spot which they would find on the following morning marked out in the snow. This happened on August 5, A.D. 358. As August is the hottest month of the year in Rome, the fall of snow at that season could only happen by miracle. The lady, on waking, happened to acquaint Pope Liberius with the purport of Our Lady's expressed wish, and found that the Pope had himself received a command from our Lady to co-operate with the pious couple in the work enjoined them. The Pope, accompanied by the clergy and people, repaired to the Esquiline and there found the ground white with snow and a plan of the future church clearly traced thereon. The basilica was begun forthwith, and completed in 360. Some recent writers think that this story rests on insufficient evidence, and observe that it is not found in the long dedication poem inscribed in marble by Sixtus III. It is, however, retained in the lessons of the feast of Our Lady of the Snow, August 5, and so is not without some authority. In the Borghese chapel of the Basilica the miraculous snowfall is commemorated every year on August 5 by a shower of white rose-leaves from the dome during High Mass."

THE OTTAWA UNIVERSITY magazine, "published by the students," is a very creditable review, filled with good and well selected reading. From the Rector's Commencement Address a few passages may be quoted:—

"Thomas a Kempis tells us that in all things we must look to the end; 'In omnibus respice finem.'"

"Evidently he does not refer to the proximate end; which is indeed usually kept in mind. For instance, the end of the scholastic year is, at least in this case, a proximate end. Where is the student who forgets it, notwithstanding the cares and distractions of his studies, recreations, and even examinations? If he could, he would emblazon the town with the date. The memory of loving parents and devoted teachers is almost as vivid in this respect; and who can blame them, in view of the sacrifices which the scholastic year entails? What Thomas a Kempis means, then, is not the proximate, but the ultimate end, and this gives the maxim a paramount importance; for the means are constantly, universally, pushing that ultimate foolishness; the dismal lot of the reprobate. Hence again, profound ignorance of the real nature of things present; as nothing can be rightly known, except in the light of its ultimate end. Allow me to apply this maxim to education, and fix your mind on its ultimate end. Now, what is the ultimate end of education? The word 'education' in itself, as we all know, means the leading from one thing to another, educate. What is that other point? Is it simply the making of a living, or food and raiment? These are means, surely not the ultimate end. Is it simply the harmonious developing, training and perfecting of the physical, intellectual and moral faculties? That is, indeed a great deal; but it is only the process of education, not its ultimate end. You do not train for the sake of training. What, then, is the ultimate end of education? It is, to quote Scripture, 'the plenitude of Christ, imparted to the children of God.' In other words, it is the dedication of God's adopted children. And, note well, this is true, not only of what is termed religious education, but of education in the full sense of the word; for there is only one kind of education, and religion is of its very essence. 'A system of education,' says Cardinal Manning, 'not based on Christianity, is an imposture.' It is not education: it cannot educate the people. Call it instruction, if you will; but in the name of Christianity, and also of truth, let it not be called education. You might as well call the tower of Babel the way to heaven. All this may be a 'hard saying' to the worldly-minded; but it is the truth. And so, that is the ultimate end God has in view in the education of His children, the angels included: the end Christ has in view in the education of all mankind; the Church in the education of all nations; and the University of Ottawa in the education of all those whom Providence has confided to her care."

MOSHER'S MAGAZINE sustains the above standard reached by previous numbers. An article by the Rev. Dr. Rivard, C.S.V., is in an enjoyably literary style.

(Continued on Page Seven.)

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## Catholic Magazines for November.

THE CATHOLIC WORLD is a readable number. The leading article is a timely "Vindication of the Rights of the People" in connection with the recent strike of the American coal miners. Says the writer:—"In the first place, the chief contention in the strike was the right of the miners to unite into labor organizations not merely for self-protection against existing injustices, but for the attainment in the future of healthful living conditions that have been denied them. The operators denied the miners the right to organize. In their interview with President Roosevelt they spoke of the illegality of the miners' organizations. They refused to arbitrate with any representative of the Unions."

"As to the legality of Trades-Unionism there can be no manner of doubt. It is admitted on all sides: it is denied only by those whose purpose seems to be to reduce honest labor to galling slavery. Leo XIII., in his historical encyclical "On the

Condition of Labor," not only teaches the right of labor to organize, but he urges organization after the manner of the mediaeval guilds as a means of self-protection. It is only by combining that the miner in Pennsylvania has secured even the shadow of a decent livelihood. Any one at all familiar with the conditions in the mine regions knows what hardships labor there has been subjected to. The greed of capital has nowhere been so evident as in the anthracite coal mines. When it was found that the American coal miner would no longer submit to galling conditions, the operator invited to the coal regions hordes of European peasants whom centuries of wrong had debased to the lowest stages of mental and physical squalor, and he tried to lower the scale of wages and break the power of the unions by pitting these human slaves against honest labor."

If the strike has taught any particular lesson it has taught that there is no such thing as absolute ownership in such sense that a man can

do as he pleases with his property irrespective of the rights of others. An exaggerated idea of ownership on the part of many has done more to breed Socialism than any other one thing. We shall probably hear no more of the claims of "the Christian men to whom God in His Infinite Wisdom has given control of the property interests of the country." In the exact sense of the word any ownership must of a necessity be limited in its nature. If a man is owner of a stick of dynamite, he cannot explode it in a public thoroughfare where the lives of others are endangered. If he owns a house, he is the neighbor of his neighbors. If he owns a coal mine, he cannot grind the faces of his workmen. He must make such provision as is necessary for their physical safety. "There is a dictate of nature," says Leo XIII., "more imperative and more ancient than any bargain between man and man: that remuneration for labor must be enough to support the wage-earner in reasonable and frugal comfort." And again he writes: "If through necessity or fear of a worse

## AFTER THREE YEARS

MR. JOSEPH ROCHETTE RECOVERED FROM RHEUMATISM.

Suffered Much Agony, His Limbs Failed, and His Strength Left Him—Hope for Sufferers.

Only those who have suffered the pangs of rheumatism know how much agony the sufferer has to endure. The symptoms vary, but among them will be acute pains in the muscles and the latter sometimes much more. At times the patient is unable to move himself, and the slightest sound aggravates the pains and outward application of any remedy must be treated through the aid of this purpose there is no medicine yet discovered capable of curing the disease. Mr. Williams' Pink Pills. Who can tell, these pills never cure even the most stubborn rheumatism. Mr. Jos. Rochette, an interview with St. Louis, in an interview with "L'Avenir du Nord," offered